CLAIMS

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A system for pervasive enablement of business processes, comprising:

a workflow engine that executes a business process model;

a context service that allows context-aware applications to obtain user context information;

an interaction controller that receives specification of individual staff activities from the workflow engine, and upon receiving a staff activity specification, obtains context information of a partner instance from the context service to determine an appropriate collaboration modality for the partner instance, and forwards the engine responses from human partners back to the workflow engine, thereby handling individual interactions with human participants; and

one or more modality adapters that encapsulate details of communicating with a specific collaboration modality.

2. The system in Claim 1, wherein the context service provides dynamic context information about human participants.

3. The system in Claim 2, wherein said dynamic context information includes a human participants' location, activity, connectivity and preferences.

4. The system of Claim 2, wherein the context service supports both synchronous query and asynchronous callback context functions.

5. The system in Claim 1, further comprising an address book that maps individual IDs to modality-specific addresses, the interaction controller accessing the address book to look up a modality-specific address.

6. The system in Claim 1, wherein the modality adapters include the adapters for instant messaging, email, e-meeting, discussion threads, phones, pagers, and other communication devices.

7. A method for pervasive enablement of business processes, comprising the steps of:

executing a business process model;

storing user context information;

receiving specification of individual staff activities;

obtaining context information of a partner instance from the context information to determine an appropriate collaboration modality for the partner instance;

directing human tasks to one of a plurality of modality adapters, each of which is adapted to exchange data with said human participants in a modality-specific manner; and

gathering responses from human participants via said modality adapter.

8. The method in Claim 7, further comprising the step of mapping individual IDs to modality-specific device addresses.

9. The method in Claim 7, wherein said directing step is based on an explicit command when instantiating the business process model.

10. The method in Claim 7, wherein said directing step is based on dynamic context information on said human participant.

11. The method in Claim 10, wherein said dynamic context information includes a human participants' location, activity, connectivity and preferences.

12. The system of Claim 10, wherein the directing step supports both synchronous query and asynchronous callback context functions.